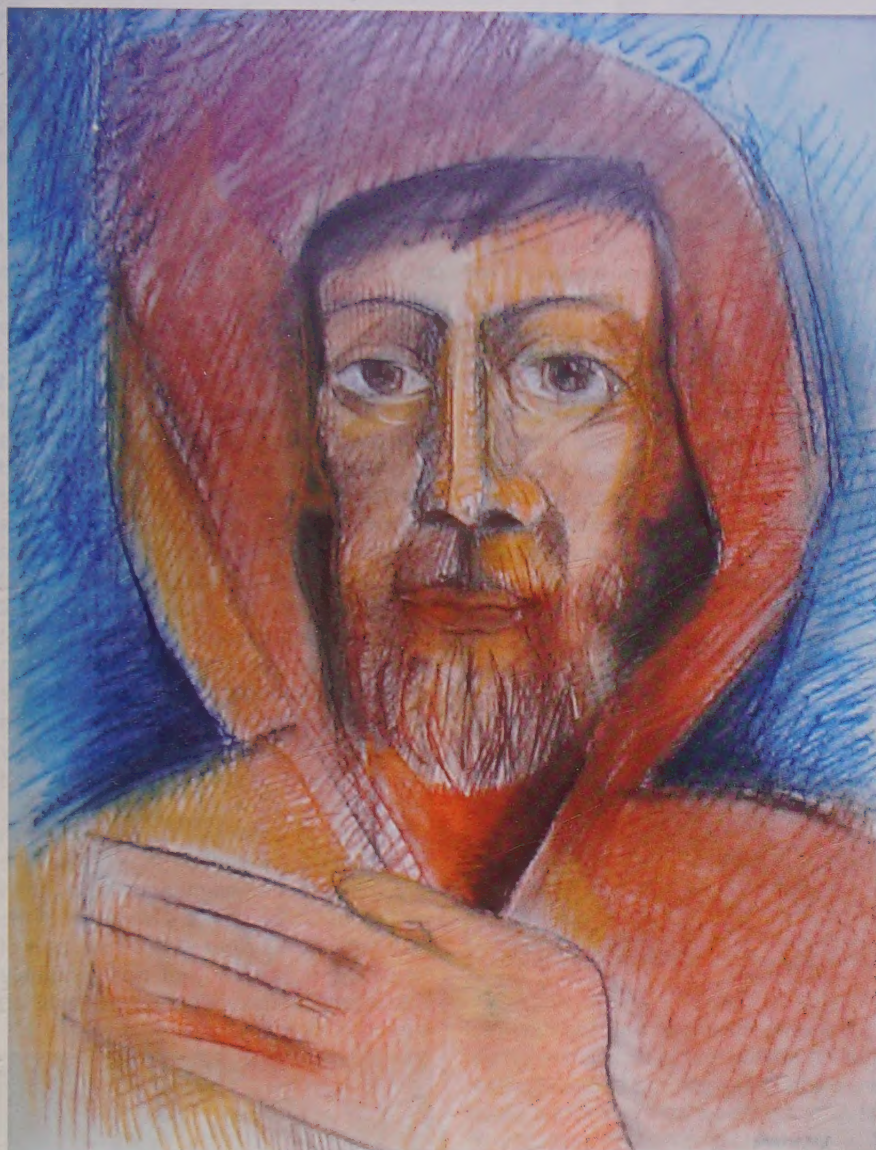


# franciscan

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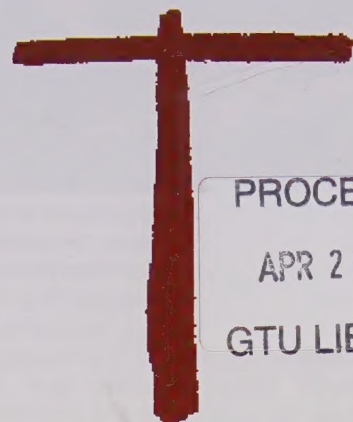
*Francis of Assisi* by Br. Philippus Philippus, OFM Cap.



## The Poor Clares *Sr Francisca OSC*

When Clare of Assisi wrote the first Rule for women religious in the history of the Church, the big question was whether she would be given papal permission to observe that Rule even in her own monastery of San Damiano just outside Assisi. The Pope was not happy about her insistence on total poverty and reliance on God. He wanted to grant her land and holdings for security, and said to her 'If you are troubled about your vow, we can absolve you from it'. 'Holy Father', was the answer, 'absolve me from my sins, but not from following Jesus Christ'. The Pope was not happy with her reply and it was only when she was on her death bed in August 1253 that the longed-for papal bull of approval reached her.

Had Clare any inkling that in the year 2012, when her daughters celebrated the 800th anniversary of the founding of her Order, they would number some 20,000 and would be found throughout the world, in every continent except Antarctica? Maybe she had, because in spite of all the difficulties she was experiencing at that time in having her Rule recognised,



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## World-wide Franciscans

What difference can my life make to the world? Sometimes we can feel a small tributary in the river of life; this edition shows something of the vast web of interconnected lives that makes up the Franciscan family world-wide, especially in the Second and Third Orders. All can share in the prayer and action of the followers of Francis, wherever their footprints have left a trace.

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*Poor Clares worldwide gathered in Assisi in 2012, to celebrate 800 years since St Clare made her promises as a penitent to St Francis on Palm Sunday 1212.*

in that Rule, she had written: 'Let the abbess, with discernment, provide them with clothing according to the diversity of persons, places, seasons and cold climates, as in necessity she shall deem expedient'. So she seems to have envisaged her sisters travelling out from Assisi, not only throughout Italy and into France, Germany, Spain and Bohemia, which had happened even during her own lifetime (she sent her own sister, Agnes, as abbess to the monastery in Florence, and she corresponded with another Agnes, formerly a princess of the royal house of Prague in Bohemia), but much further afield, into many very different 'places ... and cold climates'. From Europe they gradually went onwards and outward, to the west, to Canada, to America both North and South; to the east, to the Philippines, to India, Sri Lanka and Japan; to the south, to Africa, Australia and New Zealand and to the north, even as far as the Scandinavian countries and the Baltic states. Wherever in the world they brought the light of Clare through the centuries, their main work and objective has always been prayer and contemplation and they have always seen as their most important task the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Divine Office (it has many names), by night and by day. This Prayer of the Church offers praise and worship to God and celebrates the sacramentality of time, of the hours, days and years. At regular times throughout the day: dawn, the beginning of the working



*Another cook in a Poor Clare kitchen*

the frail and failing members of Christ's Body, the Church' and it is by their lives of prayer that they do this. Clare's teaching on prayer was very simple, but very profound: 'Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance and, through contemplation, transform your entire being into the image of the



*Packing communion wafers*

Godhead itself, so that you too may feel what his friends feel in tasting the hidden sweetness that, from the beginning, God has kept for those who love him ... gaze on him, consider him, contemplate him as you desire to imitate him'.

While he was still alive, Francis had promised Clare: 'for myself and for my brothers always to have the same loving care and special solicitude for you as for them.' This promise was very important for Clare; the link with the friars was one of the foundation stones of her order. And this promise the friars have kept; the two branches of the order, although different in aims and inspiration, have always worked together. So as the brothers travelled into mission territory to bring the Gospel, the sisters were never far behind, supporting their brothers by their lives of prayer. As there were different branches of the male Franciscan family, so there were different branches of the women's order begun by various reform movements, all trying to recapture the 'original spirit' of the founders. So those Poor Clares who followed the reform of St Colette in the fifteenth century, mostly in

day, midday, at evening and at nightfall, and then again at midnight, the sisters are in Choir, praising and thanking God and bringing before him the needs of the world and the Church, of nations and of individuals. Clare wanted her sisters to be 'a support for

northern France and Belgium, became known as 'Colettines' and those sisters who were attached to the Capuchin friars in the sixteenth century were known as 'Capuchinesses'. However, these differences have largely disappeared today since all religious families were requested after the Vatican Council, to renew and update their Constitutions. Today, vocations in the affluent west are not as plentiful as they were in Clare's day, but in the developing world they are numerous in Africa and the Philippines, in particular and now sisters are coming from these areas to renew Poor Clare life in its European heartland.

Although enclosed by tradition, Poor Clares have always been at the heart of the Church's life and mission, sometimes sealing their dedication with their own blood as martyrs, like Blessed Josephine Leroux during the French Revolution. The Order has included women of learning and education, like Clare herself and such women as Catherine of Bologna and Battista Verano who wrote and published theological treatises and were skilled artists and musicians. There have been women with mystical gifts such as Veronica Giuliani, and women who followed in the humble footsteps of Jesus the carpenter, women like Ven Margaret Sinclair who was born in an Edinburgh slum in 1900 and worked in McVitie's biscuit factory before entering the monastery in Notting Hill in London, only to die very soon afterwards of tuberculosis.

The light of Clare still shines brightly in her daughters today as they try to live according to her spirit and ideals in a world that is very different from that of the thirteenth century but where her spirit of simplicity, poverty, joy of heart, humble labour and constant prayer are still an attraction for many. *f*



*Sr Francisca OSC has been a Poor Clare nun for more than fifty years, and is the cook for her monastery in Arkley, Barnet. In her 'spare time' she obtained a PhD in Historical Theology. She has published widely in her academic areas of liturgy, monasticism, feminist studies and Franciscanism and is a part-time lecturer and Visiting Scholar at Sarum College.*





# Third Order Regular: Third Order diversity

*Fr James Puglisi SA*

**We all know how diverse the Franciscan Family is! However, the reality of the Roman Catholic Third Order**

**Regular (TOR) confirms this even more. When people speak of the Third Order many believe we are talking about lay women and men living a Franciscan spirit in the world. They would not be totally incorrect but one would need to stress immediately the word 'Regular' in TOR. Indeed these are women and men living a particular Franciscan charism in the world but by living a vowed life, a consecrated life.**

It is believed that Francis of Assisi, desiring to avoid the complications of ecclesiastical structure, simply wished to restore the life of penance by living the Gospel almost literally. In ancient times, there was the reality of the 'order of penitents'; individuals who, after committing serious sins, were enrolled in this community and assigned a certain penance to be carried out over a period of time to demonstrate a real conversion of life. This practice fell into disuse as the penitential sacramental system became more relaxed and people were re-admitted to communion by doing small acts of charity or by saying a certain number of prayers or by having a holy person do their penance for them (always at a small price to the sinner).

*Francis of Assisi heard the basic message of the gospel as 'repent and believe the good news'.*

*This he took as a mandate and encouraged men and women to do the same by a series of letters to the faithful, laying out a simple rule for doing so.*

Since Francis of Assisi heard the basic message of the gospel as 'repent and believe the good news', he took this mandate literally. For this reason, he encouraged men and women to do the same by a series of exhortations or letters to the faithful, laying out a simple rule for doing so. History complicates what happens after the church leaders became involved in this growing number of people following Francis' example. To make this part of the history short, some of these people began to retire to abandoned churches or solitary places in extreme poverty to do penance. It was difficult for the church leaders to see these people without anyone to govern them or without some 'form of life' given them. Eventually these groups of individuals were gathered under a Rule of evangelical life by taking

the Franciscan vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Hence with the passage of time they became known as the Third Order Regular.

As time marched on, very original and charismatic women and men responded to the exigencies and needs of the poor of each epoch. New communities were being founded to answer these needs, but the Catholic Church did not usually approve new rules. However, many of these realities had adopted Francis of Assisi's example and spirit and so the church aggregated these to what had been approved as the TOR Rule of life. However this Rule was not based in the Franciscan sources. After the Second Vatican Council's call to all religious congregations to return to their roots and fundamental sources, the numerous communities of Friars and Sisters began to explore the origins of their calling and foundation only to discover that the basic Rule given them by the church had little Franciscan inspiration. As a result of this *resourcement* or return to the sources, a new Rule was eventually approved by John Paul II in 1982 thus giving new resurgence to these communities. Shortly after this approval, there was the realization that many communities of diverse charisms were following the TOR Rule and there was a desire to see how each congregation could support other very diverse congregations in the living of this renewed TOR Rule. Hence the International Franciscan Conference of the Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular (IFC-TOR) was established. The Ministers General also expressed the wish that a permanent structure be set up to ensure that the common bond of their Franciscan heritage and the cooperation achieved would continue. This structure was approved and established at a general assembly of 130 general superiors who met in Assisi in 1985.

The aims of the International Franciscan Conference are:

1) To promote genuine communion within and among the Institutes of the Third Order Regular throughout the world, by fostering Franciscan life and spirituality in harmony with the spirit and content of the Rule and its fundamental values which are based on the Gospel and in

accordance with the teachings of the Church;

2) to create and maintain solidarity among the Institutes by: mutual assistance, spiritual and material, collaboration in the apostolate, mutual information and communication, assistance in the field of formation, special concern for smaller and more isolated Institutes, the creation and support of regional or national Franciscan federations or organizations wherever one or several of these means are desired;

3) to co-operate with the First and Second Orders and with the Secular Franciscan Order (the lay branch of the Third Order);

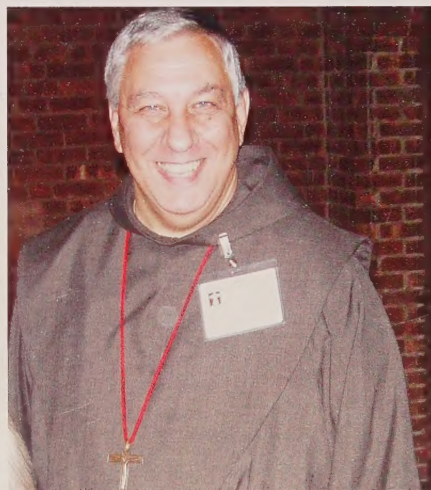
4) to encourage and disseminate research in Franciscan spirituality and history;

5) to represent the member Institutes of the International Franciscan Conference in the Church, within the Franciscan family and in the world; and

6) to support or initiate efforts to safeguard the universal rights of every human person according to the Gospel, with special regard and respect for life, freedom, justice and the environment.

The IFC-TOR is comprised of 455 institutes in over 51 different countries with a combined membership of Friars and Sisters numbering over 27,000. The diversity of their ministries is incredible. From teaching to hospital work, from prison ministry to AIDS care, from missionary to pastoral ministry, from serving the poor to contemplating the mysteries of salvation, the TOR communities are as diverse as their founders and foundresses were in meeting the needs of today's world with the same compassion that Francis and Clare did in their world.

The theme of the 2013 General Assembly, "Rooted in Christ - On Fire with the Spirit - Go, Transform the World!" expresses the passion of these vowed women and men. Come and visit us (in 6 languages) at [www.ifc-tor.org](http://www.ifc-tor.org).



**Fr. James F. Puglisi, SA is the Minister General of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement and President of the IFC-TOR. He has attended C/SSF First Order Chapters as an ecumenical observer and as a speaker.**



# 'Our mission is not to lands but to people' (FMDM constitution 69)

*-the work of the FMDM throughout the world*

**Sr Jane Bertelson FMDM**



*'Without one another in fraternity [sisterhood] naming together the experience of God, the external evangelical mission would be silenced.'* (Walter Vivani)

**The sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood around the world are always challenged by the question asked by virtually anyone we meet, 'What do you do?' On one level this is a simple answer as any**

**FMDM sister will be involved with some form of ministry but on another level people never seem quite satisfied with the answer : '... to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...'. (TOR Rule 1)**

Therefore before I write about 'what we do' I need to confirm what lies at the heart of our Franciscan Evangelical Vocation and, consequently, what lies at the heart of all we 'do'. We would see our primary and fundamental ministry as that of being 'sister' to one another in community, to the sisters and brothers in our global family and to the whole of creation. In recent years this has become central to our understanding of ourselves as missionaries and how we minister in the many and varied places we find ourselves in.

We feel very blessed that we were not founded to do anything in particular. Francis' call to live the gospel leaves us free to respond to the signs of the times and the particular situations we find ourselves in. That is not to say that in the past we, like most congregations, did not have a particular focus. For us this was certainly in the medical world - the vast majority of our sisters would have been involved in hospitals or clinics. The Divine Motherhood aspect of our title was expressed through many of our sisters being involved in maternity work, children in care or with unmarried mothers and babies. Although such a specific focus would not be evident today, care for women, children and families are very central in many of our ministries. So how do we express this call of Francis and Clare to live as sister?

Today we are 260 sisters present in ten countries - Australia, England, Italy, Ireland, Malaysia, Nigeria, Scotland, Singapore, Zambia and Zimbabwe. We have professed sisters from all these countries as well from places where we have ministered in the past e.g. USA, Philippines and New Zealand. This means most of our communities have a real international flavour to them which, in itself, gives witness in a world which often struggles to live with difference.

I will try and give a snapshot of the kind of ministries we are involved in across these ten countries and I will start in Asia Pacific - Australia, Singapore, Malaysia. It is in Singapore and Malaysia that we still have health care institutions. We are responsible for Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital in Penang, Malaysia and Assisi Hospice and Mount Alvernia Hospital in Singapore. The sisters no longer hold the senior administrative posts but would make significant contributions within Pastoral Care, Mission Effectiveness, Boards of Management, Fund-Raising and in offering their prayerful presence in many areas of hospital life. For those of you who like to surf the net, all these hospitals have their own websites and you can see the sisters in action! Of course, not all sisters are directly involved in these ministries; sisters work with migrants and refugees from Myanmar; in various parish activities, especially with the youth, and in spiritual direction. In Australia, sisters are involved with asylum seekers and Sudanese migrant women, in prison and other chaplaincies, and in parish ministries.

If we cross the seas to Africa we find FMDM sisters in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. We have been in these countries for many years and we are blessed now to have fine young African women ministering to their own people. Many of the early missionary sisters have now returned home to England or Ireland but some are still fully involved in their local community and ministries. We find a very different pattern of ministry in Africa. We do not have 'our own' ministries as in Singapore and Malaysia; the sisters tend to be part of other projects with the diocese or other Congregations. Ever since the HIV epidemic hit Africa we have had many sisters involved in HIV/AIDS ministry - this includes testing and support for those testing positive to the disease, home-based care of the sick, education, feeding and support for the many, many children orphaned as a result of HIV, and preventative health education. Today



**Sr Shirley Mills FMDM, Lusaka, Zambia.**

with the drugs that are available many people can live for much longer, but they need good nutrition to avoid such illnesses as malaria. You will find FMDM in all sorts of places where others tend not to go; for example, we have a sister who is a wonderful physiotherapist and who works in a large home for handicapped children where the need is so huge but every little bit of progress in a child's mobility is celebrated. We have sisters who are teachers, nurses, - some in ordinary schools but others in remand homes, prisons or remote rural clinics. Needless to say our images of a remand home or prison, however grim, are not a patch on the conditions and experiences of the young people or adults in such a place in Africa. To bring a Franciscan spirit of joy and hope is *the* most valuable gift and witness to the Gospel.

And so to Europe. If you read our history books we had many 'institutions' all with a health care/social work focus - hospitals, mother and baby homes, homes for

**Continued on page 5**



**Sr Maura Bermingham FMDM, Lusaka, Zambia.**





**Sr Nenlidang Gochin**, Health visiting,  
Mansa, Zambia.

children with severe disabilities, children's homes. Those days are gone and once again, you will find FMDM with the poor, the homeless, the addicted, the imprisoned as well as always trying to be 'good neighbours and active parishoners' wherever they live. We are able to share our beautiful Motherhouse with hundreds of people each year who come to Ladywell Retreat and Spirituality Centre. The Retreat Centre facilities are within the main community house and those staying often comment on the richness of being 'amongst' a praying, peaceful community.

We are a small Congregation but we are blessed with a beautiful charism of conceiving, birthing and nurturing the life of Christ with true Franciscan joy and simplicity wherever we are missioned throughout our beautiful but often broken world. *f*



**Sr Jane Bertelsen FMDM** is currently serving on the Congregational Leadership Team, based in Godalming, UK.

All who love God with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, and with their strength, and love their neighbour as themselves, and who despise the tendency of their humanity to sin, receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and bring forth from within themselves fruits worthy of penance; How happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things, and persevere in doing them because 'the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them' and God will make his home and 'dwelling place with them'.

St Francis: *Letter to the Faithful*

Prologue of the *'Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St Francis*

Raphael Suh SSF with  
Franciscan Korean Third Order  
Regular sisters at the  
Comprehensive Course on the  
Franciscan Mission Charism  
(CCFMC) in Sabah, Malaysia,  
October 2012.  
(see also Community Routes)



## Hilfield Friary 2013

11 & 12 May National Gardens Scheme - Open Garden at the Friary

★

Friday 13 September

'Francis, the holy jester' a play by Dario Fo, performed by Mario Pirovano.

★

Saturday 14 September Stigmata Festival

Eucharist at 12 noon, followed after a picnic lunch by a talk on a Franciscan theme

★

For further information and for the programme of weekend and day events, see  
[www.hilfieldfriary.org.uk](http://www.hilfieldfriary.org.uk)

For bookings: The Friary of St Francis, Hilfield, Dorchester DT2 7BE  
Tel 01300 341 741 [hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk)

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## SSF in Sweden

### *Micael Christoffer N/SSF*

### *Jan-Eric Jonsgården TSSF (FTO)*

### *Christer Säll TSSF (FTO)*

Franciscan brothers arrived in Sweden quite soon after Francis had died. The first house in Sweden started in Visby in the year 1233. Since then more houses were to follow (Söderköping, Skara, Uppsala, Enköping, Stockholm etc.) In Scandinavia the developments were divided into three periods. During the first period (1230 - 1300) 34 houses were established. In the next period (1300 - 1400) no new houses were built, but in the third period (1400 - 1500) we had fourteen further houses in the area.

The earlier development in Scandinavia was in a high degree connected with the royal families, who supported the Franciscans before other religious orders at that time. King Abel of Denmark for instance gave one of his palaces (in Slesvig) to be used by the Franciscans, and King Valdemar of Sweden was a good friend to the brothers. During his time as king the Franciscans established their house in Stockholm (1268 or 1270; we do not know the exact year). The next king in Sweden, Magnus Ladulås, was held as the biggest favourer of the Franciscan movement in Sweden. Via donations from King Magnus a cloister for the nuns of St. Clare was built in Stockholm in 1286. One of his daughters became an abbess of the Poor Clares.

So you could say that the good relations with the royalty made it easier for the Franciscans to grow. On the other hand the Swedish kings in the sixteenth century closed this movement, and all other religious orders. Poor Clares had to leave, among the first. The reformation made it impossible to be part of a religious order. By law you could no longer even

live in Sweden and at the same time be a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

In the twentieth century it was possible once again to start religious orders in Sweden, and now the establishment of the Franciscan movement within the Swedish church started also. The background you will find in the Diocese of Västerås. The director of its diocesan house at Rättvik (Stiftsgården Rättvik) was inspired by SSF First Order brothers to build the first real retreat house in Sweden, at St Davidsgården in 1962.

*TSSF in Sweden is today  
an Area within the  
European Province. It has  
almost 50 tertiaries and  
is growing.*

The friendship with SSF also resulted in First Order brothers coming to take part in the youth holidays at Stiftsgården Rättvik during the summers in the 1960's. Some of the Swedes who met the brothers became interested to learn more about them and SSF.

In December 1971 Brother Michael as the Provincial Minister of SSF, and Brother John-Charles SSF were invited to hold a conference at Stiftsgården Rättvik about Francis and the SSF. This conference resulted in twelve people who wanted to test their vocations as members of the Third Order. So, in the same way as the Third Order started in England with a close contact with the First Order, so the Third Order in Sweden started with First Order brothers as novice-counsellors to the tertiaries. Brother John-Charles was the first brother to take responsibility for the Swedish group. After two years he was succeeded by Brother Giles. In the autumn of 1974 six novices were life-professed in front of Brother Giles. The Third Order of SSF (TSSF) within the Church of Sweden was established.

At the same time, in the beginning of the 1970's, two young Swedes tested their vocations to become First Order brothers in SSF in England. During their novitiate they moved back to Sweden with the

intention to start a First Order house in Sweden, outside Gothenburg. But in the end they came to the conclusion not to be in the First Order, so they started a community of their own within the Church of Sweden. Some years later, in 1983, they decided to convert to be Roman Catholics and are today Third Order Regular. They still have their convent outside Gothenburg, at Jonsered.

With the help from the brothers at Jonsered three women started in 1979 to test their vocations as Franciscan sisters. When the brothers decided to convert, the sisters stayed within the Swedish Church and are now located at Sjövik, outside Gothenburg, as the Helige Franciskus Systraskap (Klaradals kloster). Their spirituality can be likened to that of CSF.

TSSF in Sweden is today an Area within the European Province. It has almost 50 tertiaries and is growing. The tertiaries are divided into local groups in five places: Stockholm, Gothenburg, Falun, Linköping and Uppsala. The local group in Gothenburg has good contacts with the brothers at Jonsered and with Klaradals kloster.

The work within the local groups is quite similar to the other areas in the province. But there are of course some special things we do in Sweden. For instance the local group in Stockholm is responsible for morning-prayers each Wednesday morning in one of the big churches in the city. These prayers are quite popular for people to attend before going to their jobs. Most people attending are not Franciscan.

The tertiaries in Sweden are spread over a rather big area, from Lycksele in the north to Ystad in the south; a distance of about 1,300 km between those two towns. Therefore, since the start of the Third Order in Sweden, each year they have a chapter when all the tertiaries come together for a weekend. You might call it a general chapter/ meeting because we see it more or less as an obligation to

*Continued on page 7*



*Micael Christoffer is a novice and is currently living at Glasshampton. He began his Franciscan life in the Third Order in Sweden.*

#### **For those who like the outdoors....**

**Hilfield Families Camp**  
**27 July - 5 August 2013**

Contact: Helen and Kelvin Inglis  
01256 893 644  
email: hinglis733@btinternet.com

**Hilfield Youth Camp**  
for young people 14 years old upwards  
**11 - 18 August 2013**

Contacts and bookings:  
Andy Smith: 07940074107  
andy.allyhyc@hotmail.co.uk  
Bob Bailey: 01924 259966  
bobjess@btinternet.com

**Pilgrims of St Francis: 2013**  
**UK National Pilgrimage**  
25 May - 1 June

Stamford to Peterborough  
(Next year's pilgrimage will be in August)

**International Pilgrimage-Sweden**  
30 July - 7 August  
website: cdsf.org



## Minister's Letter

*Sister Helen Julian, Minister General of the First Order Sisters, writes:*

Dear Friends,

I'm writing during my Christmas break from ordination studies at Ripon College Cuddesdon, just outside Oxford. My course is only a year long, so I've been very busy this first term, trying to fit everything in. The days go past in a whirl of mission and ministry, liturgy, bible, patristics, worship, eating - and Hebrew. Learning another language has proved to be one of the most challenging but also one of the most satisfying parts of the course.

We're a small group, so there's no hiding place when it's my turn to read the next word or translate the next item of homework. But there's also a lot of laughter. We're using a very venerable grammar as our text, so we learn how to say 'thy horse' rather than 'your'. We wondered when we were ever going to need to say 'she-ass' (an example of an irregular feminine noun). And our introduction to the wonders of the 'furtive Pathah', caused great hilarity, as we imagined this little vowel symbol lurking in the linguistic undergrowth.

Of course the point of learning the language is to be able to read the Old Testament in the original, and although we're only just reaching the point of reading actual texts, I can already see how knowing some vocabulary and some grammar makes sense of a lot of variations in translation. It's also increasing my respect for biblical scholars. Finding the right way to express alien idioms can be really difficult; and becoming aware of how easily the whole meaning of a Hebrew word can be changed by the precise

placement of a dot or a line has given me a deeper respect for those who take on the task of translation.

But I've also been reflecting on the actual experience of learning. I've drawn from earlier learnings, such as the martial art I practiced for a number of years. There, learning to fall was absolutely essential and those who didn't get the hang of it rarely persevered - in Hebrew learning the alphabet proved to be a similar very basic skill, without which nothing else was going to work. In both, making a commitment to turning up to the classes regularly, and engaging, doing whatever was necessary to learn, has been really important. Just wanting to learn wasn't enough - the desire had to be given practical expression. I've been thinking how this insight might apply to other parts of my discipleship.

I've also been thinking ahead to future ministry. There are two strands of Hebrew at college - intensive, and light. I'm doing the intensive course, and thriving on the challenge. Others are taking the light course and learning at a pace which suits them better. In the church, in our communities, do we sometimes try to make everything 'light' for fear of putting people off? It's right to offer gentle introductions, but it may also be right to offer something more demanding. Some people need to be stretched and may be put off by something which seems over simple or too slow.

More widely still, I'm wondering what this experience might have to say about how we learn to listen more attentively to those whose 'language' of faith is very different to our own - not in terms of being



an actual foreign language, but in having different assumptions, different understandings of key concepts, different ways of expressing what's central. With a foreign language speaker we know we have to be aware of these dimensions, but perhaps we need also to have that awareness when engaging with those of different Christian traditions, and with those of other faiths. If we can give time and effort to this, we may sometimes find we actually agree despite apparent disagreement. And where we don't, we would at least be debating real differences and not talking past one another, divided by an apparently common language, which in reality needed some careful translation.

Meanwhile, back to the imperfect regular verb ....

Pax et bonum,

*Helen Julian CSF*

*Continued from page 6*

take part. It is a good opportunity to get to know each other, despite the long distances between us.

We try to have these meetings in different places around Sweden, but at least every second year we are at St Davidsgården Rättvik, where one of our tertiaries is director and another one president of the Board.

Nowadays we always invite one or more of the sisters from Klaradals kloster to join our annual meetings, because they are in the same church and we have lots in common. Three of our tertiaries have moved to Sjövik to be able to be close to the sisters and their life.

It is interesting to note that we just now have two Norwegian postulants, living in the south of Norway. They belong to the local group of Gothenburg and the intention is that both of them will be noviced at the beginning of 2013. In that case this will be the start of establishing SSF within the Norwegian Church. There is also a small group of SSF tertiaries now in Finland. *f*

## Theme Prayer



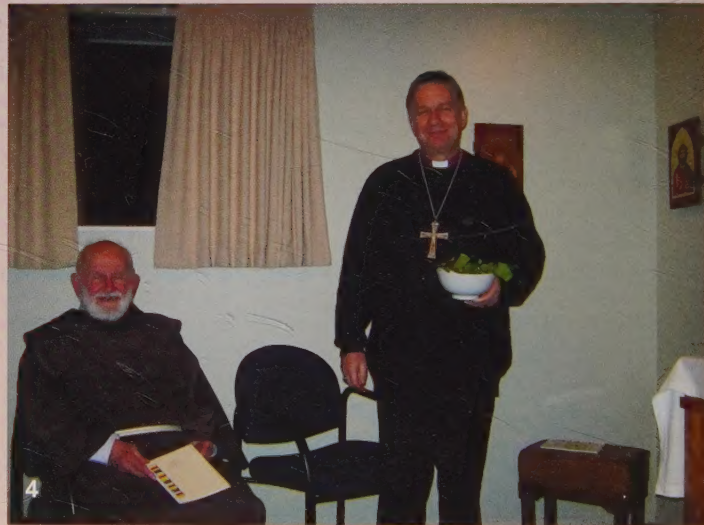
**O Friend of the forsaken  
and Lover of the unloved,  
make us bearers of your presence to all.  
Teach us to walk in the poverty of your Son  
and to be among your people as those who serve;  
in the name of him who for our sakes became poor,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The Daily Office SSF (2010), p. 787*



# Province of the

This province of SSF stretches from (1) Sri Lanka, where Lionel is involved with peace initiatives including Franciscan Solidarity for Peace and Reconciliation, across to (2) Korea where there are now four Korean brothers in the friary near Gangchon: Cyril, Stephen, Lawrence and Raphael Suh, pictured here with Alfred Boonkong and Christopher John, the Minister Provincial. Moving southwards, (3) in Hamilton, New Zealand, Brian and Damian Kenneth live with several 'Companion Brothers' including Phil Dyer TSSF who wrote two icons when the one-time garage then storeroom was turned into an oratory in the friary in 2012. (4) Brian and Archbishop David Moxon in the oratory after it had been blessed. In Australia, there are two friaries - Stroud and Brisbane. (5) Simone busy with some maintenance at Stroud. For many years, brothers have come to Stroud from the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea provinces as part of their spirituality programme, and Bruce-Paul has also gone to the islands to teach and train brothers there. (6) The Minister General's visit is a good 'excuse' for an excursion: Luke Manitar, Simone, Bruce-Paul, Clark Berge, Wilbert, Mathew Sikoboki and Alfred BoonKong on a beach trip during the Stroud Franciscan Spirituality programme. (7) During Provincial Chapter: Archbishop Roger Herft in conversation with Daniel, Brian and William. (8) Nathan James was ordained to the priesthood on 1 December, 2012, here he is later in the day, presiding at his first Mass at St Philip's Church, Brisbane, where the brothers are responsible for the parish. (They went there with the bishop's expectation that the church would close down within a few years...) James Andrew moved back to Brisbane at the end of 2012, after several years in Darwin practising in the field of tropical medicine and is working at the nearby Princess Alexandra Hospital. (9) In January 2013, Nathan-James was installed as chaplain at All Souls St Gabriel's School, Townsville, a considerable distance north of Brisbane. The brothers have been involved in various ways with this school over the last 20-odd years. (10) Bart is studying the Celtic Harp at the Brisbane Conservatoire, and teaching music; he has also been involved with performances to raise funds for cancer research and leukaemia.





# vine Compassion





# Community Routes



*In the Southwark Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham: Bishop Michael Ipgrave, Joyce and Sue during the renewal of Joyce's vows, and Sue, Gina, Bishop Michael, Joyce and the Acting Archdeacon of Southwark, after the re-dedication of the chapel.*

## CSF Southwark:

### ◆◆ people

#### ◆ Celebrating 40 years of profession

On 4th January, 2013, the house chapel hosted a service to mark **Joyce's** 40th Anniversary of Profession. The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Woolwich, presided at the eucharist which was attended by 14 people: 5 CSF sisters and other friends. **Sue**, the Minister Provincial, received Joyce's renewed commitment to her vows and gave a homily, while **Gina** led the intercessions. A celebration meal in the house followed the service.

**Joyce** had made her Profession at Compton Durville, Somerset in January 1973, and her Life Profession was in San Francisco in December 1975. Over the years Joyce has served the Community in very many capacities, and most recently as Minister General, a post she held for 10 years until February 2012.

### ◆◆ place

#### ◆ Re-dedication of Southwark Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham

Back in the late 1970's, the small chapel in the courtyard of the Vicarage of St Alphege Church, Southwark, was made into a Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. This was the gift by his parishioners to the then Vicar, Fr. Eric Mathieson, on the 25th anniversary of his ordination. In the years between the closing of St Alphege church building in 1982 and the formation of the worship space in the hall in 1993, the Shrine was used by the parish for its regular worship.

In more recent years the Shrine sustained significant damage from a

leaking roof so was in need of major repairs for it to be 'fit for purpose' again. The repairs and refurbishments were undertaken by the PCC of the parish of St George the Martyr with St Alphege and St Jude, Southwark, last summer. Most generously, the parish gifted the Shrine to the care of the Community of St Francis, now resident in St Alphege Clergy House, who use it for their daily worship.

On 15th December, 2012, the Bishop of Woolwich re-dedicated the Shrine in the presence of a number of clergy and friends of the Community. It is the hope of the sisters that the Shrine will be used also by visiting groups and individuals. It has a seating capacity of about twenty and all are welcome into this sacred space.

### ◆◆ ARC Conference

'New Monasticism' seems to have come to the attention of many in traditional orders lately, and it was the theme of the input from Tessa and Mark Holland at the Anglican Religious Communities Conference held at Emmaus House, West Wickham, in October 2012. An exercise at the beginning of the day, drawing up a time-line for monasticism/religious life throughout the life of the Church, helped us to see how new groups come out of established ones and that often these movements occur at times of significant cultural shift. We looked at some of the characteristics of new monastic communities and were challenged by the Christian dedication of many of those in these groups, and to think about how our own communities can be more inclusive.

### ◆◆ Asia/Oceania

#### Seminar 2012

*Jenny Tee writes:*

87 Franciscans from many countries throughout Asia and Oceania, gathered at the Pace e Bene Retreat Centre of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (FSIC) in Sabah, Malaysia, in October 2012, for a Seminar on the Comprehensive Course on the Franciscan Mission Charism. **Jenny Tee**, along with **Jemma** and **Raphael Suh** represented C/SSF and also met up with a TSSF brother from Bangkok.

The CCFMC is a Roman Catholic initiative, comprising a structured programme of 25 Lessons. The focus of the course is mission, in the sense that all Christians are missionaries, and Franciscan mission in particular, drawing from Francis' and Clare's engagement in the world. The programme aims to be international, stressing the importance of local context, and to embrace all branches of the Franciscan family. The material draws on the early Franciscan sources, as well as later scholarship and the latest



*Sr Barbara OSB, Christine James, and Mark Holland, assistant facilitator at the ARC conference*





**Jemma, Raphael Suh and Jenny Tee at the CCMFC**



**Standing on the threshold.... Anglican novices, January 2013**

revisions bring in greater reference to Clare, alongside Francis. The course employs a 'See - Judge - Act' method, similar to other models of social action and liberation theology.

Over a week of study, worship and living together, we got to know one another and shared our experiences of Franciscan life in practice.

Within this large and varied gathering, we four Anglicans were warmly welcomed. Most importantly, the Seminar enabled us to build a network of relationships, and I found a lot of encouragement in this. That which we share as Christians and Franciscans seems to win out over any structure and to enable us to understand more of one another.

## ◆◆ Internovitate Conference, 2013

On Monday 7th January, novices from as far north as Whitby, as far west as Ty Mawr and as far south as Canterbury converged on the Convent of the Sisters of the Love of God in Oxford. For three glorious days we sat at the feet (metaphorically!) of Dr Peta Dunstan of Cambridge University - the acknowledged expert in the history of Anglican Religious Life - as she imparted some of her knowledge and enthusiasm to us. What became very clear during our first visit to Littlemore (where John Henry Newman, later Cardinal Newman, established a small religious community) was that there was a distinctively Anglican way of being a Religious, a way which unites the best parts of the Anglican tradition of

scholarship, prayer and liturgy with the more ancient inheritance of our monastic tradition(s). This was a very clear demonstration of what might be called 'Anglican Patrimony.' As part of the conference we also visited parish churches (St Barnabas, Jericho and St Mary the Virgin); former religious houses (St Stephen's House and Nashdom); places of learning and scholarship (Littlemore and Pusey House) and current religious houses (All Saints, Fairacres and the Sisters of the Precious Blood) and were encouraged to see them all as part of the inheritance of the Oxford Movement and the teaching of Dr Pusey. It was not, of course, 'all work' and we enjoyed meeting our fellow novices and spending time with them, reflecting together on our experience thus far of religious life. This was all held in the embrace of the prayer life of the Sisters of the Love of God and the All Saints Sisters who welcomed us warmly and who allowed us to join with them in the offering of the daily office and Eucharist.

## ◆◆ New Horizons

**Malcolm** will retire as Vicar of St Peter's Bentley and there will be a closing service of thanksgiving on 30th June for ten years of ministry by Malcolm and other brothers there, after which he and **Cristian Michael** will leave the Vicarage and that Franciscan House will close. However, the brothers have been looking forward to establishing a new house in the Diocese of Newcastle as a base for urban ministry and for novice placements in the city. The new house will be in the vicarage of the parish of St Anthony of Egypt, Byker and whilst SSF will not be acting as the parish priest for that parish the brothers do hope to contribute to the life of the Byker Team ministry and to MINE, the Mission Initiative Newcastle East, in the wider area. **Damian** moved to Byker in early April and Malcolm will join him as the second permanent member of the household. Cristian Michael has been helping with the practical tasks necessary in both closing Bentley and opening Byker, and **Peter** also spent some time assisting in this. It is hoped that there will be photos and further news of both the departure from Bentley

and the new work in Byker in a later edition of *franciscan*.

## ◆◆ Honoured!

**Archbishop Roger Herft**, Protector General of SSF, and Bishop Protector of the Province of the Divine Compassion, was recognised in the Australia Day civic honours list, being made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM): 'For significant service to the Anglican Church of Australia through leadership roles in ecumenical and interfaith relations and advocacy for social justice.'

James Andrew, Guardian of the Brisbane friary, writes: We brothers know how hard Archbishop Roger works for the church and how supportive he has been to us in this province as our Bishop Protector and also as Protector General. We are glad that he has received this recognition from the wider Australian society.

## ◆◆ Round up

Luke Daines was admitted as a novice on the Feast of the Epiphany, taking the name **Michael Jacob**. **Helen Julian** expects to be ordained deacon by the Bishop Protector at Hilfield on 4th July

**Damian** made a temporary move from Hilfield to Bentley in early February until Easter when, as mentioned above, the Byker house became available and he moved there; **Malcolm** will join him in Byker later. **Cristian Michael** will move to Canterbury, probably in early July, where he will be based for the summer prior to the main changeover time for novices later in the year.

**Barnabas Francis** is no longer a member of SSF.

As *franciscan* was being compiled, news came in from the brothers in the Solomon Islands asking our prayers for those affected by a tsunami, especially on the island of Temotu. The buildings of our SSF brothers, the Melanesian Brotherhood and Community of the Sisters of the Church suffered minor damage; vegetable gardens on the island will have been affected, also. The Solomon Island government, the church and other organisations sent relief, assisted by international aid. f



**In the footsteps of St Oswald: SSF novices at Heavenfield.**



# An Update from Northern Ireland

**David Jardine SSF**

David Jardine runs an inter-denominational healing ministry in Northern Ireland, based in Belfast. Divine Healing Ministries has its office in Townsend Street Presbyterian Church, which is situated beside a gate in one of Belfast's many peace lines, gates which can be shut to separate Protestant and Roman Catholic communities when tensions are high. David has also been involved in organising Prayer for Ireland for 25 years.

*He gives his perspective on the situation in Northern Ireland at the beginning of 2013, when it seemed for many as though the clock had been turned back.*

I think that most people in Northern Ireland were hoping that the street riots in Belfast in December 2012 and January 2013 were a thing of the past. Certainly for those of us who have been involved in reconciliation for many years it became depressing the longer the riots went on. Ostensibly it looked as if it was a problem about the flying of the Union flag. At the beginning of December, Belfast City Council, which now has a nationalist and republican majority, took a decision to fly the Union flag only on designated days instead of every day, which has been the case for more than a century. Probably most Protestants in Northern Ireland did

not agree with this decision. A small number of them expressed their opposition in a very violent way, while most Protestants were dismayed and embarrassed at these riots.

Over the weeks of these community disturbances, a debate has been raging in the media over what caused the violence. There are probably a number of factors. The Protestant community have always felt that their best interests are served by being part of the United Kingdom. Catholic aspirations would be much more towards a united Ireland, although a recent poll showed that at least 50% of Catholics are quite happy to remain in

Northern Ireland as it now is. Many Protestants feel that the working out of the political solution since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 has not been favourable towards them, that their sense of Britishness is gradually being eroded. They also feel that the material benefits of the peace process have not been equally shared with them, leaving Protestant working-class areas disadvantaged and deprived. I believe there is something in these complaints and a number of other grievances, but that the explosion of violence was entirely the wrong way to get something done about them. I also feel, as a member of the Protestant community, that we could have done much more to help ourselves. It is obvious that many Protestants have found

change much more difficult to accept, as we have moved toward a shared society in Northern Ireland.

So where do we go from here? In spite of our recent troubles I still believe that there is real hope for Northern Ireland, provided we stick close to our Christian heritage. In some ways it is amazing what has been achieved since 1998. For some years now we have had two groupings, Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party, diametrically opposed in their political aspirations, sharing power together and maybe doing it better than the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in the rest of Britain.

Nonetheless, the two sections of the community need to show a much greater spirit of generosity towards one another. For Christian people that will involve forgiveness. My way of forgiving, and it really works, is to ask God to bless anyone who has hurt me, and to keep it up for as long as it takes. I feel that a percentage of Protestants need to make it a habit to ask God to bless Catholics, and many Catholics need to do the same for Protestants. During the month of July



*David Jardine involved in prayer ministry.*

some parades have been the issue that has sparked off violence. I am already praying a number of times every day for those parades: asking God to bless those who march, those who protest against them, and those who support both groups. When we ask God to bless he takes us at our word. He blesses and changes people.

May I also say that during the disturbances of December and January I can never remember a time when so many people were contacting me, asking me to pray or thanking me for prayer. This is maybe the real way to deepen healing and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. In the ministry that I work for, we have organised seven years of prayer for the renewal and revival of the faith in our land. We have almost completed four years now, and we are asking people to say every day for our country a prayer that was written at a retreat centre in Wales. May I invite readers to join us in praying this prayer daily for your own country and for Ireland:

O high King of Heaven,  
Have mercy on our land.  
Revive your Church.  
Send the Holy Spirit for the sake of the children.  
May your kingdom come to our nation.  
In Jesus' mighty name. Amen. *f*



*David Jardine standing at the peace line between Shankill Road and Falls Road, opposite the church where Divine Healing Ministries is based.*



*Murals feature on many walls in Belfast, sometimes encouraging peace, at other times invoking violence. This mural beside Townsend Street Presbyterian Church features a roundabout and either side of it, children skipping or playing on the swings.*



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# Ronald SSF

## *Funeral address given by David Jardine SSF*

**I think we have come here today to say farewell to a great man. For me greatness is judged largely by character, and by that standard Brother Ronald was a great man.**

I have been visiting Ronald twice a year from Belfast for the last five or six years, and he always gave me a great welcome.

I always brought Ronald a good bar of chocolate, but when he opened the drawer I noticed that there were already about ten other bars there. The most I ever saw him take was one square of chocolate. I also noticed in that drawer a wide range of people and situations throughout the world that Ronald was interested in and praying for.

For some years Ronald had been profoundly deaf and almost completely blind. I had to stand and shout into his good ear. Sometimes I had to shout three or four times before he heard me. But he never became impatient. He simply put his hand behind his ear, smiled and invited me to speak again. I think the staff found Ronald like that as well. Some of them told me one time that he was the most peaceful man in the home. When they did something for him, like help him into bed at night, he always said 'God bless you.' When I visited him I always finished with a prayer, and at the end he always said a very hearty 'Amen'. His faith was alive and well.

Rev. Sandy Montgomery, who faithfully brought communion to Ronald every month, said that when he received communion he always said 'Thank you Jesus. Thank you, Lord.' And the whole atmosphere changed. Sandy also said that there was a real feeling of holiness about Ronald. He prayed for Sandy, and for many other people. Who knows how many lives were touched by Ronald's prayers as he sat in that chair every day, hour after hour?

It is only five months since we celebrated Ronald's 100th birthday, in August, 2012. That was a great day, well organised by the home, but for me the highlight was the

service of Holy Communion in his room before we went out for the public event.

Ronald joined the Society of St. Francis in the late 1930's. It looked as if there was going to be a war with Germany. Ronald said he had no quarrel with the German people. He did not want to fight a war with them. So he joined SSF. Before joining he had been in the entertainment business, and performed with George Formby. He was not boasting. It was just a remark made in passing.

In the Society, Ronald served in many different places - Cerne Abbas, Cambridge, Stepney (Cable Street), and in industrial missions in Coventry,

*Ronald died on  
13 January 2013,  
and his funeral was held  
at St Andrew's Episcopal  
Church, Ardrossan.  
He was aged one hundred  
years and in the seventy-first  
year of his profession  
in vows.*

Warrington and Liverpool. He also served in Barcable. In Coventry he went about on a bicycle. He told me that at the beginning men in factories laughed at him dressed in a habit, but that eventually settled down. He had great entertainment skills, playing the ukulele and doing impersonations with wigs and disguises. Children remembered Ronald for his beach missions.

Adelaide College in Saltcoats were grateful to have Ronald among them. Members of the team said he was a very easy person to live with. The life of the Holy Spirit was very important to Ronald, and maybe that was one reason he fitted so easily into Adelaide College.

It was great that Marilyn Patterson, the Principal of the College, and some of her colleagues were able to be with Ronald on the night that he died. His passing was very peaceful.

The impression I always had of Ronald was that he was not in any way a self-centred person. He was never trying to attract attention to himself. His motivation was much more one of service.

What does the Gospel say to help us at this time? Firstly, it tells us that this life is not the only life. Jesus said to his

disciples 'Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go there to prepare a place for you.' This life is not the only life. I don't think Ronald ever had any doubt about where he was going. Secondly, we are not given much detail in the New Testament about what heaven is like, but the little we are given makes it clear that it is a wonderful place: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has even conceived the wonderful things God has prepared for those who love him.'

'I consider that our present sufferings are as nothing compared to the glory and the splendour that will be revealed in us.'

And in Revelation 21 we are told that in the nearer presence of God there is no more sorrow, no more suffering, no more pain, nor sickness, nor cancer, no more depression, nor deafness, nor blindness, none of the things that drag us down in life.

And thirdly, this dimension of life beyond the grave puts suffering in this life into perspective. Some people, some families, even some nations have to put up with more than their fair share of suffering. If this were the only life, that would seem very unfair to those people. For Ronald those last years were not easy, but now he is completely free.

My final point is that occasions like this remind us that we will all be in this position one day ourselves, ready to make the biggest journey we will ever have to make. It is of vital importance that we be the best prepared we possibly can be to make that journey.

I said at the beginning that we have come to say farewell to a great man, who lived his life well for God. We commit Ronald into God's hands that he may live for all eternity with him, in a place far better than where we are now. *f*



**Ronald SSF**

### *franciscan*

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